



Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
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# Peace Dale Elementary School

SOUTH KINGSTOWN

## THE SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT

April 29, 2005



### **School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT)**

**The school accountability program of the Rhode Island Department of Education**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## The Purpose and Limits of This Report

This is the report of the SALT team that visited Peace Dale Elementary School from April 25- 29, 2005.

The SALT visit report makes every effort to provide your school with a valid, specific picture of how well your students are learning. The report also portrays how the teaching in your school affects learning, and how the school supports learning and teaching. The purpose of developing this information is to help you make changes in teaching and the school that will improve the learning of your students. The report is valid because the team's inquiry is governed by a protocol that is carefully designed to make it possible for visit team members to make careful judgments using accurate evidence. The careful exercise of professional judgment makes the findings useful for school improvement because these judgments identify where the visit team thinks the school is doing well, and where it is doing less well.

The major questions the team addressed were:

- ◆ *How well do students learn at Peace Dale Elementary School?*
- ◆ *How well does the teaching at Peace Dale Elementary School affect learning?*
- ◆ *How well does Peace Dale Elementary School support learning and teaching?*

The following features of this visit are at the heart of the report:

Members of the visit team are primarily teachers and administrators from Rhode Island public schools. The majority of team members are teachers. The names and affiliations of the team members are listed at the end of the report.

*The team sought to capture what makes this school work, or not work, as a public institution of learning. Each school is unique and the team has tried to capture what makes Peace Dale Elementary School distinct.*

*The team did not compare this school to any other school.*

*When writing the report, the team deliberately chose words that it thought would best convey its message to the school, based on careful consideration of what it had learned about the school.*

**The team reached consensus on each conclusion, each recommendation, and each commendation in this report.**

The team made its judgment explicit.

This report reflects only the week in the life of the school that was observed and considered by this team. The report is not based on what the school plans to do in the future or on what it has done in the past.

This school visit is supported by the Rhode Island Department of Education as a component of School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT). To gain the full advantages of a peer visiting system, RIDE deliberately did not participate in the active editing of this SALT visit report. That was carried out by the team's Chair with the support of Catalpa. Ltd.

The team closely followed a rigorous protocol of inquiry that is rooted in Practice-based Inquiry™ (Catalpa Ltd). The detailed *Handbook for Chairs of the SALT School Visit, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* describes the theoretical constructs behind the SALT visit and stipulates the many details of the visit procedures. The *Handbook* and other relevant documents are available at [www.Catalpa.org](http://www.Catalpa.org). Contact Rick Richards at (401) 222-4600 x 2194 or [ride0782@ride.ri.net](mailto:ride0782@ride.ri.net) for further information about the SALT visit protocol.

SALT visits undergo rigorous quality control. Catalpa Ltd. monitors each visit and determines whether the report can be endorsed. Endorsement assures the reader that the team and the school followed the visit protocol. It also assures that the conclusions and the report meet specified standards.

## Sources of Evidence

The Sources of Evidence that this team used to support its conclusions are listed in the appendix.

The team spent a total of over 126 hours in direct classroom observation. Most of this time was spent in observing complete lessons or classes. Almost every classroom was visited at least once, and almost every teacher was observed more than once. Team members had conversations with various faculty and staff members for over 45.5 hours.

The full visit team built the conclusions, commendations, and recommendations presented here through intense and thorough discussion. The team met for a total of 31 hours in team meetings spanning the five days of the visit. This time does not include the time the team spent in classrooms, with teachers, and in meetings with students, parents, and school and district administrators.

The team did agree by consensus that every conclusion in this report is:

- ◆ *Important enough to include in the report*
- ◆ *Supported by the evidence the team gathered during the visit*
- ◆ *Set in the present, and*
- ◆ *Contains the judgment of the team*

## Using the Report

This report is designed to have value to all audiences concerned with how Peace Dale Elementary School can improve student learning. However, the most important audience is the school itself.

How your school improvement team reads and considers the report is the critical first step. RIDE will provide a SALT Fellow to lead a follow-up session with the school improvement team to help start the process. With support from the South Kingstown School Improvement Coordinator and from SALT fellows, the school improvement team should carefully decide what changes it wants to make in learning, teaching, and the school, and amend its School Improvement Plan to reflect these decisions.

The South Kingstown School District, RIDE and the public should consider what the report says or implies about how they can best support Peace Dale Elementary School as it works to strengthen its performance.

Any reader of this report should consider the report as a whole. A reader who only looks at recommendations misses important information.

## 2. PROFILE OF PEACE DALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Peace Dale Elementary School, located in South Kingstown, Rhode Island, serves students in kindergarten through grade five. The original one-room schoolhouse was built in 1854. Numerous renovations have occurred since that time, and the school can now accommodate 625 students. The original brick exterior and slate roof, however, remain intact.

Of the 529 students who attend Peace Dale, 464 (89%) are white, 25 (5%) are Native American, 12 (2%) are Hispanic, 13 (2%) are black, and 9 (2%) are Asian. Twenty percent are serviced through Individualized Education Plans, while four students have Section 504 plans. Twenty-one percent receive free or reduced price lunch. There are two half-day kindergarten sessions and one full-day kindergarten session.

The professional staff consists of a principal, an assistant principal, 22 regular education classroom teachers, four resource teachers, two self-contained classroom teachers, an inclusion classroom teacher, four literacy teachers, a school nurse, a school psychologist and a social worker. Additionally, an art teacher, a music teacher, a part-time band and a part-time orchestra teacher as well as a media specialist, three physical educators (one full-time, two part-time), two occupational therapists, a physical therapist, and three speech and language therapists (two full-time, one part-time) complete the staff. The support staff includes two administrative secretaries, two office clerks, four custodians (three full-time, one part-time) and sixteen teacher assistants.

Classrooms at Peace Dale are heterogeneously grouped. Three program configurations are available for grades one through five. Single grade students participate in a ten-month learning cycle in a single grade class. Looping students work with the same teacher for twenty months. Multi-age students participate in a twenty-month learning cycle, which blends children of different ages and curricula. Additionally, Kaleidoscope, a small school within the larger Peace Dale School, offers a continuous multi-year educational experience for approximately 100 children and their families. In this community, grades one and two are multi-age classrooms, and grades three and four are looping classrooms. This program is made available to all families as a parent choice at the end of the child's kindergarten year.

Peace Dale teachers meet regularly to discuss the continuity of their classroom programs and to ensure student growth. Each quarter they review and analyze student work by grade level. The school regularly hosts evening "Curriculum Showcases" to keep parents informed of its educational practices and curriculum.

This is the second year Peace Dale has worked with the Principles of Learning through the University of Pittsburgh's Institute of Learning. A new district Language Arts and Mathematics curriculum have recently been developed. The Cast-A-Spell program is also new to the school. Peace Dale is a responsive classroom school that has focused its professional development on mathematical problem solving and writing.

Peace Dale's close proximity to the University of Rhode Island offers many benefits to its students, including the use of campus facilities, assignment of student teachers, mentor/internship programs and after school reading support. Parents and other community volunteers donate considerable time in the areas of literacy, mathematics, mentoring and enrichment to the school community.

Peace Dale Elementary is a Title I, federally funded program school that targets seventy-one students in kindergarten through grade five who tested below expected their grade level in reading. The full-day inclusion kindergarten program for regular and special needs students is in its third year. A regular education teacher, a special educator and two teacher assistants work with students in the inclusion classroom. Selected kindergarten students requiring additional literacy support attend the Extended Day Literacy program for one hour, five days a week. An after school homework club helps students who need assistance in mathematics. The local YMCA provides before and/or after school child care for approximately 54 students.

Students are involved in numerous school activities. The SMILE program, an enrichment program for minority and disadvantaged students, provides activities for these students in math, science and technology. Thirty-one School Safety Patrol members help keep the school safe. Additional before and after school activities include Art and Soul, World Language, Sponge Hockey, Journalism and CLASS – *Creative Learning After School Specials*. Students are also engaged in robotic design activities using robotic-based educational technologies and Legos.



### **3. PORTRAIT OF PEACE DALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT**

Located in South Kingstown, Rhode Island, Peace Dale Elementary School is a large suburban school nestled between the historic mill buildings in the village of Peace Dale. Although the school has undergone many renovations since it was built in 1854, the original picturesque brick building, complete with a slate roof, greets visitors as they enter. It is bright, clean and inviting and obvious to all visitors that the custodial staff takes great pride in maintaining this immaculate school. Many refer to it as a “Norman Rockwell School” or “a melting pot” because it serves 523 students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds from kindergarten through grade five.

Every morning, rain or shine, the principal and vice-principal warmly greet the students. This personal greeting sets a positive, supportive tone for the day. Students feel safe here and free to take risks. They are curious learners who respect their peers and understand the consequences for misbehavior.

Two administrators lead the school. Their complementary leadership styles enable them efficiently to handle the demanding schedule and responsibilities of this large, complex school. They listen to the concerns of faculty, staff, parents, and students and communicate with them frequently. They constantly seek ways to improve and believe that it “takes a whole school to educate a child.” Their fair, but strict, discipline style sets clear expectations for student behavior and a climate in which students can learn and explore. Accomplishments of students and teachers are celebrated and valued. These administrators involve all teachers in the decision-making process through thirteen different committees. The coordinating team focuses on the daily operations and management concerns of the school, which allows the school improvement team to focus on the academic needs.

Numerous before and after school programs provide consistent support for struggling learners. Partnerships with local businesses, the university and service agencies abound. The school is continuously used for academic, enrichment and community events. A strong sense of community exists here. Parent involvement is high, and volunteers are numerous. Everyone takes pride in Peace Dale’s high performing, improving status.

Teachers are passionate about their work and fiercely believe that the abundant academic programs and varied approaches to instruction are all effective teaching tools. However, not all teachers implement these programs with the same level of success. There is little differentiation of instruction for either reluctant or talented learners. The current schedule provides little time for teachers to coordinate or plan. Few teachers take advantage of the teacher expertise that is currently available on the staff. There is minimal cross-grade level communication. Grade level expectations, as well as expectations for student achievement, are inconsistent both within and across grade levels.

Peace Dale faces many challenges. The excessive number of instructional programs and approaches cloud a common vision. Teachers identify “their students,” rather than believe that the students of Peace Dale School belong to all teachers. Resource and reading support outside the classroom is the primary intervention for struggling learners. Consistent support and instruction from a special educator for the severe and profound is missing. Morning recess and snack time shorten extended blocks of valuable teaching time. Scheduling limits the time teachers have for consistent collaboration and planning, as well as for cross grade level communication and the efficient use of support personnel. All of these factors hinder the forward momentum of the school.

## 4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

### Conclusions

Most students are strong problem solvers. They compute accurately and demonstrate a solid understanding of math concepts. Students know how to solve problems connected to their daily routines. Knowledge of how to apply these skills is greatly enhanced through the Robotics Park project. Students plan, design, trouble shoot and persevere as they create three-dimensional electronic robotic figures. Students say they learn how to use gears and how to improvise to make the gears work. In most classrooms, students routinely share their solutions and build on the knowledge of their peers. While many can clearly explain their mathematical thinking orally, few know how to communicate their mathematical thinking clearly in writing. Some written explanations are clear, concise and organized while others are incomplete and rarely connect mathematical ideas. Many students do not have an adequate command of mathematical language to explain their solutions. A significant percentage of students nearly achieved the standard on the 2004 New Standards Reference Examination in mathematics. Sixty-seven percent achieved or exceeded the standard in mathematical concepts, and twenty-two percent nearly achieved the standard. This pattern continues in problem solving. Fifty-seven percent met or exceeded the standard in problem solving, and twenty-one percent nearly achieved the standard. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with school improvement team and students, talking with students, teachers, school administrators, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, Robotic Zoo binder)*

The majority of students at Peace Dale School read well. Most know how to use a variety of skills and strategies, not only to comprehend text, but also to analyze and interpret what they read. They can make reasonable predictions when previewing text, and they can adjust them as they read more. They can locate answers to questions and use their background knowledge to better understand the text. Students read books from a variety of genres for enjoyment, as well as to learn. They discuss what they read and can identify important literary elements. They show their understanding of the text they are reading through their response journals entries. Student entries progress from being simple to more in depth over time, thus demonstrating their growth as readers. All of these good reading practices help students to become effective, independent readers. However, a few students at every grade level omit or substitute words when they read. They say the book does not make sense. This usually happens when students have chosen books to read independently. Not all students connect what they read to other books they have read or to their personal experiences. Despite this, ninety-one percent of the students met or exceeded the standard in basic reading understanding, and six percent nearly achieved the standard on the 2004 New Standards Reference Examination. Eighty-six percent met or exceeded the standard in analysis and interpretation, and twelve percent nearly achieved the standard. *(following students, observing classes, discussing student work with teachers, meeting with school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, reviewing classroom assessments, talking with students and teachers, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, school improvement plan)*

This same pattern of achievement continues in writing. Most students at every grade level write well, and the others are well on their way to becoming effective writers. They write frequently, and they often write about what they are learning in the content areas. Students write with catchy leads, strong voice and descriptive details. They proudly say they need to create a picture in the reader's mind and need to show, not tell, what is happening. They know how to use graphic organizers effectively as tools to improve their writing. Most student writing is organized and focused, and it contains good concluding sentences. While many students say they know how to revise and edit, their work shows frequent errors in mechanics and conventions. In a few classrooms, students do not write as well. Their writing contains few details, lacks imagination and shows little evidence that the students have followed the writing process. In some classrooms, the instruction of writing is interrupted by morning recess. On the 2004 New Standards Reference Examination, ninety percent of the students met or exceeded the standard in writing effectiveness, and seventy-six percent met or exceeded the standard in writing conventions. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with school improvement team, students and parents, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, talking with students and teachers, reviewing school improvement plan, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries)*

The students at Peace Dale School are motivated, eager and curious learners. They are independent thinkers who feel safe to take risks in their learning. Most set high expectations for their personal achievement, and many ask to do extra work. They say they like hard work, and sometimes they are bored. Students are well behaved and respectful. They actively listen to their teachers and their peers. Parents, staff and students report the discipline procedures are strict, yet fair, and that everyone clearly understands the expectations for appropriate behavior. Students say that they learn, have fun, learn from their mistakes and make friends here. This positive and respectful behavior sets a tone that is conducive to productive learning. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, meeting with school improvement team, students, parents, school administrators, talking with students, teachers, school administrators, reviewing school improvement plan, records of professional development activities, 2004 SALT Survey report)*

### **Important Thematic Findings in Student Learning**

Students:

- ◆ *Are enthusiastic, confident learners*
- ◆ *Are self-driven and want to be challenged*
- ◆ *Value learning and support one another as learners*

## 5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING FOR LEARNING

### Conclusions

Most teachers are effective math instructors. They talk to their students about the importance of learning and using math in personal and powerful ways. However, not all teachers sufficiently model and teach students how to write clear justifications of their solutions to problems. Good problem solving occurs in classrooms where teachers require students to use mathematical language and make connections between mathematical ideas, both orally and in writing. Teachers in these classrooms share examples of exemplary student work and discuss what is good. They ask questions that make their students extend their mathematical thinking, and they encourage their students to find multiple ways to solve solutions. These effective teaching practices do not exist in every classroom. As a result, students in some classrooms compute well, but they do not understand how or why they arrived at the correct answer. These students often lack a clear understanding of underlying math concepts. While some teachers modify problems to ensure student success, few differentiate their instruction. As a result, many students are pulled out of their classrooms for math support. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with school improvement team, parents and students, talking with students and teachers, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, classroom assessments, school improvement plan, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, math curriculum binder)*

While teachers at Peace Dale School teach reading well to the majority of their students, far too many miss valuable opportunities to reinforce and/or challenge their students. Excellent reading instruction occurs in classrooms where teachers share their thinking process as they read to their students. These teachers meet with individual students, as well as with small groups, to read and discuss books. In these classrooms, students read books at their appropriate levels and interest, as well as books that challenge them. These teachers meet frequently with individual students to assess their reading progress. They then use this information to adjust their instruction. In these classrooms, reading teachers, resource teachers and other support personnel effectively teach with the regular education teacher to meet the needs of the students. However these effective teaching practices do not occur in every classroom. Few use guided reading groups to differentiate their instruction. While both classroom teachers and reading teachers administer frequent assessments, they use this valuable information mainly to identify struggling readers who eventually receive reading services outside the classroom. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with school improvement team, students, parents, school and district administrators, talking with students and teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing school improvement plan, ELA curriculum binder, PD self-study, classroom assessments, classroom textbooks, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries)*

Teachers at Peace Dale School are effective writing instructors. In most classrooms their demands are rigorous, and students write with voice, good leads and rich language. Teachers connect writing to quality literature and discuss the authors' writing styles. This effective teaching practice frequently transfers to student work. Teachers require students to write daily and to use writing as a tool to connect their learning in all content areas. They ask students to share their work, and they provide students with meaningful feedback about the strengths and weaknesses of their writing. Teachers require students to keep writing journals and portfolios that allow students to see their progress over time. While many teachers use rubrics as a tool to guide student writing, these are not consistent; they lack a common language and purpose. As a result, students are often confused with the terms, and parents say that grading varies from teacher to teacher. In some classrooms, morning recess interrupts the instruction of writing and interferes with the writing process. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with school improvement team, students, parents, school administrators, Peace Dale Elementary School self study, talking with students and teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing Peace Dale Elementary School Writing Project, school improvement plan, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, records of professional development activities)*

Teachers are dedicated, hard working professionals who work and volunteer long beyond the end of the school day. They are confident in their ability to teach students effectively and take great pride in the accomplishments of this learning community. They share a common vision for student behavior and effectively implement strong classroom management techniques that create an environment conducive to learning. Parents and students report that the teachers are approachable and listen to their concerns. However, parents also report, and the SALT team concurs, that the criteria for high student achievement is not the same throughout the school. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, meeting with school improvement team, parents, students, school and district administrators, talking with students, teachers and school administrators, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, Peace Dale Elementary School self-study, 2004 SALT Survey report)*

### **Commendations for Peace Dale Elementary School**

Hard working, dedicated professionals

Effective classroom management techniques

### **Recommendations for Peace Dale Elementary School**

Increase differentiated instruction in reading, writing and math. Use teacher expertise on staff to provide job-embedded professional development. Seek ways to observe classrooms outside the district.

Increase the use of assessment data to inform instruction. Develop monitoring tools to determine student progress. Provide professional development on how to implement assessments and use the data.

Increase guided reading groups.

Develop and implement clear criteria for high student achievement. Develop a clear understanding for both teachers and students in how to use rubrics to improve student work. Include common terminology throughout all grades.

Challenge students to justify their mathematical solutions thoroughly, and hold them accountable for quality work.

Model and provide numerous opportunities for “accountable talk™”, and increase academic rigor for all students. Continue to participate in Learning Walks™, and provide meaningful feedback.

Explore ways to provide longer blocks of uninterrupted teaching and learning time. Review schedule, and eliminate morning recess.

### **Recommendations for South Kingstown School District**

Provide professional development and support for differentiated instruction and inclusion. Explore and fund ways for teachers to observe classrooms inside and outside the district.

Increase the number of Learning Walks™. Continue to provide meaningful feedback.

Continue to provide professional development and support in the proper administration of Diagnostic Reading Assessments and writing of Personal Literacy Plans.

## 6. FINDINGS ON SCHOOL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING

### Conclusions

Learning does not occur in the least restrictive environment for many students at Peace Dale School. Use of the inclusion model is minimal. In a few classrooms, all students receive support and instruction from both regular educators and special educators that is tailored to their individual needs. An “all kids” agenda exists—a strong philosophy that all students can learn regardless of their learning differences. However, many students, who could receive support within the regular education classroom, receive instruction in resource and reading rooms located in the lower level of the school. Teachers often do not effectively use their teaching time in the regular education classroom, when students are pulled out for support services. The instruction either does not go forward or the teacher assistants must review instruction when students re-enter the class. An over-reliance on the pull out model limits the learning opportunities for all students. Furthermore, teachers report that there is no consistent support and instruction in the 230-day program from a special educator who is certified to teach the severe and profound. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with school improvement team, students, parents, school and district administrators, talking with teachers, school and district administrators, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, classroom assessments, records of professional development activities)*

This problem is further compounded by the placement of students and scheduling conflicts. The identification rate of special education students is high. Frequent and lengthy evaluation team meetings remove teachers and support personnel from the classrooms. The “balanced classroom” philosophy prevents the clustering of special education students within the regular education classrooms. The inability to cluster students reduces the effectiveness of support personnel and fragments instruction. Both regular educators and special educators report that they rarely have time to coordinate or communicate. Furthermore, not all teachers view the education of special education students as a shared responsibility. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with school improvement team, school and district administrators, talking with teachers, school and district administrators, reviewing schedule binders, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing district and school policies and practices)*



An abundant number of programs support student learning. Kaleidoscope forms a smaller learning community within the larger school and offers a multi-year educational experience for students. This effective model offers a personalized learning environment, as well as consistent instruction. “Book buddies,” is a program that pairs older students with younger students, who meet once a week to read and discuss books. Creative Learning After School Specials (CLASS) provides programs that address student interests and creativity. CARES, Connecting All Resources for Educational Support, focuses on literacy, mentoring and enrichment by using community volunteers and URI students to help students with academic and social needs. The Homework Club provides additional support for those students, who repeatedly do not complete their homework. SMILE (Science Math Investigative Learning Experiences) provides science, math and technology enrichment for minority and disadvantaged students in grades four and five. All of these programs broaden students’ knowledge and provide stimulating and supportive learning environments, while helping students increase their confidence and achievement. Parents report that Peace Dale School is like a revolving door; it provides a continuous stream of events and opportunities for parents to be involved in their children’s learning. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, talking with students, teachers, school administrators, meeting with school improvement team, parents, school and district administrators, reviewing Peace Dale Elementary School Handbook, CARES Handbook)*

Parents, teachers, district administrators and the SALT team agree that the strong leadership at Peace Dale is a key component in the success of the school. The two principals have a strong vision, and they work hard to implement it. Their complementary leadership styles act as a “check and balance system” that allows them effectively to meet the demands and responsibilities of leading a large, complex school. Both are highly visible—greeting students in the morning, eating with them in the cafeteria and interacting with them throughout the day. Parents and students say their discipline approach is strict, but fair. The administrators are proactive problem solvers. They listen to concerns and communicate frequently. They involve many in the decision-making process, as evidenced by the thirteen committees that currently help manage the school. They emphasize the importance of community building. Parents and teachers say their effective, stable leadership skills positively impact the learning environment of Peace Dale School. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, meeting with school improvement team, students, parents, school and district administrators, talking with students, teachers, school administrators, reviewing district and school policies and practices, school improvement plan, SALT binder, 2004 SALT Survey report)*

The school improvement plan, as written, is an effective tool to improve student learning. It is based upon an extensive self-study and reflects the learning needs of the students. Changes in student learning behaviors and teaching practices are clear and precise. However, implementation of the action steps is not clearly evident in all classrooms. In addition, the information gained from the monitoring tools is not being effectively used. As a result, the plan is not being utilized to its fullest potential. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with school improvement team, school and district administrators, observing the school outside the classroom, reviewing school improvement plan)*

### **Commendations for Peace Dale Elementary School**

Competent leadership with a strong vision

Supportive programs that meet the needs and learning interests of students

Positive ties with the school and community

Effective, consistent, school-wide discipline procedures

### **Recommendations for Peace Dale Elementary School**

Clearly define and articulate the expectations for inclusion. Increase inclusion practices and time for teacher collaboration. Utilize teacher expertise on staff.

Continue to provide professional development and support for the inclusion model. Observe effective inclusion models both within the district and outside of it.

Include all stakeholders in the placement of special education students. Embrace the philosophy that all students belong to all teachers.

Cluster special education students to utilize teachers and support staff more efficiently and effectively.

Provide consistent management of the educational program for the 230-day students by a special educator who is certified to teach the severe and profound.

Continue to use the school improvement plan to guide instruction and student learning. Use monitoring tools to make informed decisions about instruction, and adjust action steps to reflect this information.

Continue to support and provide programs that enrich student learning.

### **Recommendations for South Kingstown School District**

Provide consistent management of the educational needs of the students in the 230 day program by a special educator who is certified to teach the severe and profound

Continue to provide professional development in the coaching, co-teaching and inclusion models. Support teachers as they work toward a more inclusive environment.

## **7. FINAL ADVICE TO PEACE DALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

The SALT team commends your hard work, dedication and commitment to your school community. Your welcoming, positive spirit shines throughout the school, and this will serve you well as you take the next steps to improve student learning.

Create a shared vision of learning for both yourselves and your students. Work together to do whatever it takes to implement a true inclusion model. Provide a workable schedule for both special educators and regular education teachers to coordinate, communicate and collaborate. You are fortunate to have an abundance of resources and teacher expertise. Build upon the solid foundation and philosophy that already exists in your inclusion kindergarten classroom. Seek alternate interventions to reduce the number of referrals to special education. Remember, it takes a “whole school to educate a child.”

While you enjoy the reputation of a high performing, improving school, there is still work you need to do. Increase the differentiation of instruction within your classrooms to support and challenge all students. Continue your training in differentiated instruction to increase your capacity to meet the challenge of helping all students learn well. Planning, professional development and district and school-based support are the keys to your success. Your students will only benefit.

Continue to work together to develop consistent high expectations both within and across grade levels. Use the Principles of Learning™ to ensure that clear expectations, accountable talk™ and academic rigor exist in all classrooms. Use feedback from Learning Walks™ to monitor the action steps in your school improvement plan.

The SALT team urges you to use the conclusions and recommendations in this report to guide your next steps. We wish you well as you continue to improve.

## ENDORSEMENT OF SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT

### Peace Dale Elementary School

April 29, 2005

Catalpa Ltd. monitors all SALT visits and examines each SALT visit team report to determine whether it should be endorsed as a legitimate SALT report. The endorsement decision is based on procedures and criteria specified in *Endorsing SALT Visit Team Reports*. (available on Catalpa website). Catalpa Ltd. bases its judgment about the legitimacy of a report on these three questions:

Did the SALT visit team and the host school conduct the visit in a manner that is reasonably consistent with the protocol for the visit?

Do the conclusions of the report meet the tests for conclusions specified in the visit protocol (important, accurate, set in present, shows the team's judgment)?

Does the report meet the tests for a report as specified in the visit protocol (fair, useful, and persuasive of productive action)?

Using the answers to these questions, the final decision to endorse the report answers the overall endorsement question: Is this a legitimate SALT team visit report? In order to make this determination, Catalpa weighs all the questions and issues that have been raised to decide whether a report is legitimate or not. While it is possible that a challenge related to one of the three questions listed above would be serious enough to withhold or condition the endorsement, it is more likely that issues serious enough to challenge a report's legitimacy will cut across the three questions.

While the SALT visit protocol requires that all SALT visits are conducted to an exceptionally high standard of rigor, visits are "real-life" events; it is impossible to control for all unexpected circumstances that might arise. The protocol for the conduct of the visit is spelled out in the *Handbook for SALT Visit Chairs*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition.

Since unexpected circumstances might result in either the team or the school straying too far from the protocol for a visit, Catalpa monitors both the school and the team during a visit regarding the conduct of the visit.

Most often actual visit events or issues do not challenge a report's legitimacy and Catalpa's monitoring and endorsement is routine. A district administrator, principal, faculty member or parent may not like a report, or think it is too negative, or think the visit should have been conducted in a manner that is not consistent with the protocol. None of these represent a challenge to a report's legitimacy; concerns that might challenge an endorsement are based on events that stray too far from the protocol.

The Catalpa review of this visit and this report was routine.

The steps Catalpa completed for this review were:

- discussion with the chair about any issues related to the visit before it began
- daily discussion of any issues with the visit chair during the visit
- observation of a portion of the visit
- discussion with the principal regarding any concerns about the visit at the time of the visit
- thorough review of the report in both its pre-release and final version form

The findings from the review are:

1. This team was certified to meet team membership requirements by RIDE staff.
2. This report was produced by a legitimate SALT Visit that was led by a trained SALT Visit Chair and conducted in a manner that is consistent with SALT Visit procedures.
3. The conclusions are legitimate SALT visit conclusions.
4. The report is a legitimate SALT visit report.

Accordingly, Catalpa Ltd. endorses this report.



Thomas A. Wilson, EdD  
Catalpa Ltd.  
May 23, 2005

## REPORT APPENDIX

### Sources of Evidence for This Report

In order to write this report the team examined test scores, student work, and other documents related to this school. The school improvement plan for Peace Dale Elementary School was the touchstone document for the team. No matter how informative documents may be, however, there is no substitute for being at the school while it is in session—in the classrooms, in the lunchroom, and in the hallways. The team built its conclusions primarily from information about what the students, staff, and administrators think and do during their day. Thus, this visit allowed the team to build informed judgments about the teaching, learning, and support that actually takes place at Peace Dale Elementary School.

The visit team collected its evidence from the following sources of evidence:

- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *following 8 students for a full day*
- ◆ *observing the work of teachers and staff for a full day*
- ◆ *meeting at scheduled times with the following groups:*
  - teachers*
  - school improvement team*
  - school and district administrators*
  - students*
  - parents*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *discussing student work with teachers*
- ◆ *analyzing state assessment results as reported in Information Works!*
- ◆ *reviewing the following documents:*
  - district and school policies and practices*
  - records of professional development activities*
  - classroom assessments*
  - school improvement plan for Peace Dale Elementary School*
  - district strategic plan*
  - 2004 SALT Survey report*
  - classroom textbooks*
  - 2004 Information Works!*
  - 2002-4 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries*
  - 2004 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results*
  - School and District Report Cards*

*Peace Dale self study*

*Peace Dale Elementary School Handbook*

*Binders:*

*Mentoring*

*Math curriculum*

*ELA curriculum*

*Schedule*

*PTO Minutes*

*Faculty Newsletters*

*Grade Level Minutes*

*Substitute Reports*

*Good Deeds*

*Community Partnerships*

*Writing Project*

*Learning Walks*

*Curriculum Showcasing*

*Committees*

*Trait Based Writing*

*Family Guide to "Curriculum in a Nutshell"*

*Robotics Park Project*

*Student Disciplinary Referrals*

*CARES Handbook*

## **State Assessment Results for Peace Dale Elementary School**

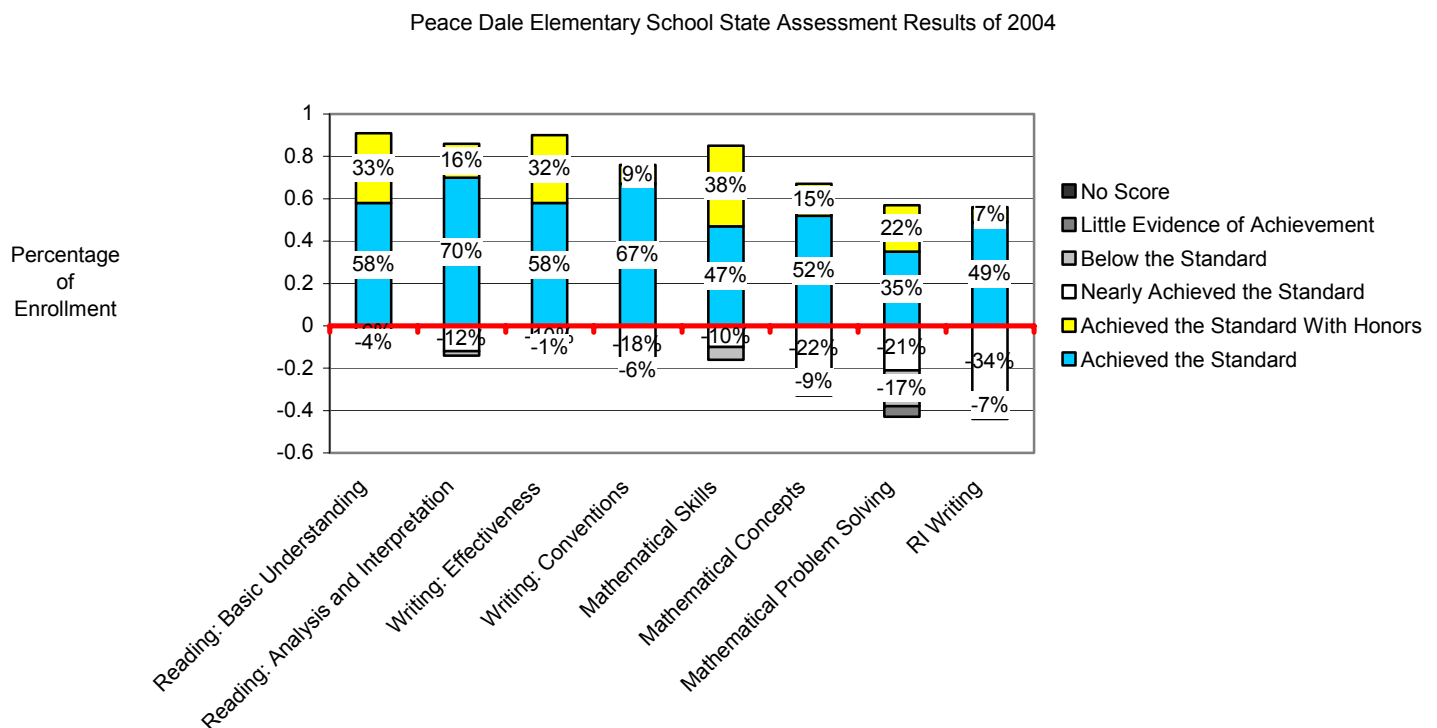
Assessment results create pieces of evidence that the visit team uses as it conducts its inquiry. The team uses this evidence to shape its efforts to locate critical issues for the school. It also uses this evidence, along with other evidence, to draw conclusions about those issues.

This school's results are from the latest available state assessment information. It is presented here in four different ways:

- ◆ *against performance standards;*
- ◆ *across student groups within the school;*
- ◆ *and over time.*

### **RESULTS IN RELATION TO PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

The first display shows how well the students do in relation to standards in English/Language Arts and mathematics. Student results are shown as the percentage of students taking the test whose score places them in the various categories at, above, or below the performance standard. Endorsed by the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education in 1998, the tested standards can be found in the publication *New Standards Performance Standards*.

*Table 1. 2003-2004 Student Results on Rhode Island State Assessments*

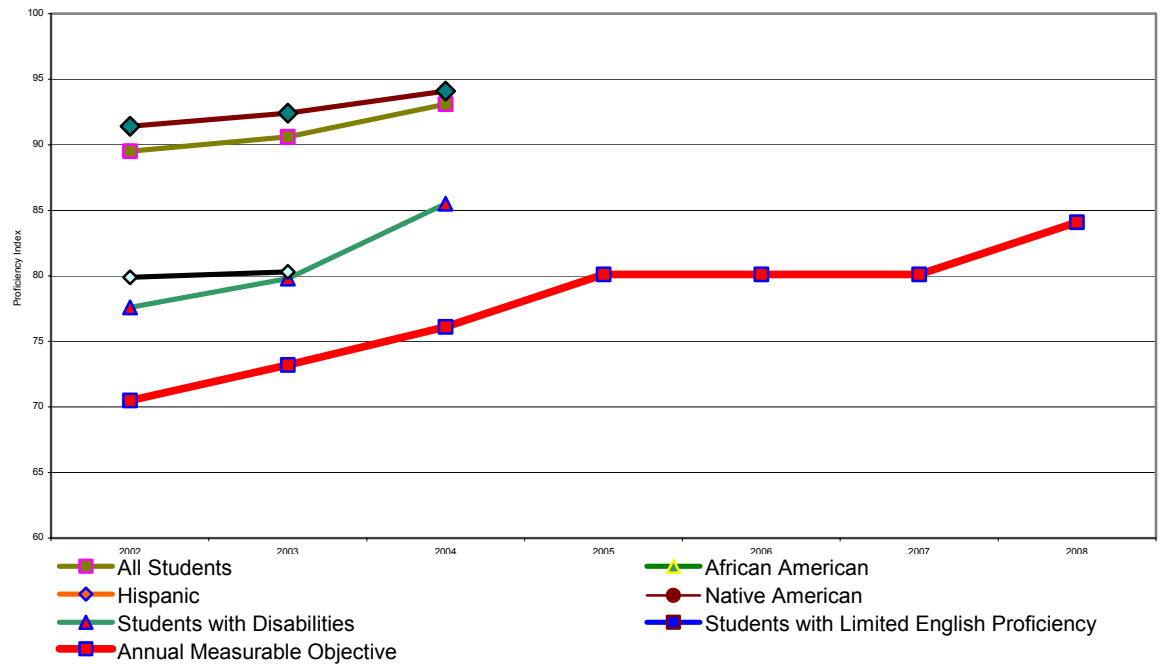
### RESULTS ACROSS STUDENT GROUPS WITHIN THE SCHOOL

An important way to display student results is across different groups of students with different characteristics who are in the school. This display showing targets and index scores, in accordance with the No Child Left Behind federal legislation creates information about how well the school meets the learning needs of its various students. Since breaking students into these smaller groups can result in groups becoming too small to show accurate results, this display shows the results based on three years of testing. Any student group whose index scores do not meet the targets set by RIDE require additional attention to close its performance gap

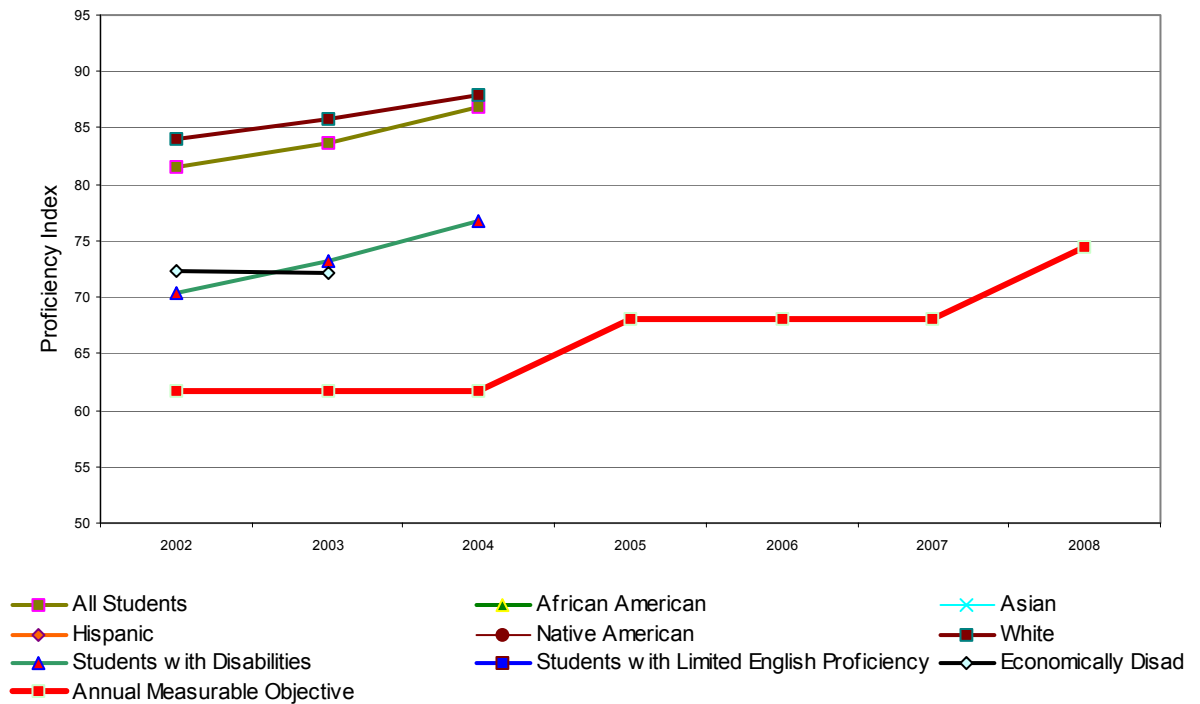


*Table 2. 2002-2003 Student Results Across Student Groups Within the School*

Annual Proficiency, Peace Dale Elementary School, ELA, Gr. 4



Annual Proficiency, Peace Dale Elementary Gr. 4 Math



### REPORT CARD FOR PEACE DALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

This Report Card shows the performance of Peace Dale Elementary School compared to the school's annual measurable objectives (AMO).

These report card scores describe Peace Dale Elementary School as a high performing and improving school.

*Table 3. Report Card for Peace Dale Elementary School*

## 2004 Rhode Island School Report Card

RI SCHOOL: **PEACE DALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

RI DISTRICT: **SOUTH KINGSTOWN**

INDEX PROFICIENCY SCORE, 2002-04	ENGLISH LANG. ARTS TARGET SCORE: 76.1				MATHEMATICS TARGET SCORE: 61.7			
	THIS SCHOOL	TARGET MET?	THIS DISTRICT	THE STATE	THIS SCHOOL	TARGET MET?	THIS DISTRICT	THE STATE
All Students	93.1	YES	91.2	86.1	86.8	YES	83.5	77.5

African Americans	*	YES	*	77.8	*	YES	*	65.9
Asian	*	YES	*	84.5	*	YES	*	77.1
Hispanic	*	YES	*	75.8	*	YES	*	65.8
Native Americans	*	YES	*	83.9	*	YES	*	73
White	<b>94.1</b>	YES	93.1	88.5	<b>88</b>	YES	85.4	82
Students with Disabilities	<b>85.5</b>	YES	78.6	69.5	<b>76.7</b>	YES	70.4	66.4
Students with Limited English Proficiency	*	YES	*	68.9	*	YES	*	61
Students who are Economically Disadvantaged	*	YES	79.3	77.8	*	YES	70.3	68.4

PERCENT OF STUDENTS TESTED, 2002-04	Target: 95%				ATTENDANCE RATE	Target: 90%			
	THIS SCHOOL	TARGET MET?	THIS DISTRICT	THE STATE		THIS SCHOOL	TARGET MET?	THIS DISTRICT	THE STATE
	<b>100</b>	YES	99.4	99.1		<b>95.6</b>	YES	95.5	94.8
English Language Arts	<b>100</b>	YES	99.4	99.1					
Mathematics	<b>100</b>	YES	99.1	99.4					

TARGETS MET/MISSED, THIS SCHOOL		
	TARGETS MET	TARGETS MISSED
English Language Arts Index Score	9	0
Mathematics Index Score	9	0
Percent Tested	2	0
Attendance Rate	1	0
<b>THIS SCHOOL IS CLASSIFIED AS:</b>  <b>High Performing and Improving</b>		

KEY: \* Student group has too few students to calculate results.  
† "Safe Harbor" - Student group has fallen short of the target but has made sufficient improvement over last year's score.  
†† Student group has met the target based only on the most recent year of test results.

NOTE: For information on targets and classifications, please see [Quick Guide](#).

Information Works! data for Peace Dale Elementary School is available at <http://www.rido.net>.

**THE PEACE DALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAM**

Joan Alix  
Assistant Principal

Julie Chapin  
Parent

Fran Corvese  
Parent

Deborah Geader  
Grade 5 Teacher

Jen Martin  
YMCA

Debra Pendola  
Principal

Helen Pernicone  
Grade 5 Teacher

Earline Rowinski  
Special Education/Resource Teacher

Mary-Beth Schmitt  
Kindergarten Teacher

Arlene Sisto  
School Secretary

Holly Washburn  
Parent

**MEMBERS OF THE SALT VISIT TEAM**

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